

# International Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 7 July 2006



Mayor's Office, City of Houston

Office of International Affairs & Development

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## Message from the Mayor

During this past June, I had the honor and the opportunity to speak before the 2006 *Global Petroleum Show* in Calgary and to formalize with Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier the *Houston-Calgary Bilateral Partnership for Business and Cultural Growth and Cooperation*. Both of our cities have long shared ties in the energy and culture sectors; this agreement is a fitting symbol of our past cooperation and a good starting point for developing other areas of collaboration, namely in the aerospace and healthcare industries.



Bill White

As we celebrate the birthday of our nation this month and the principles upon which our country was founded, I am pleased to share with you the many events, conventions, and conferences, and celebrations of Houston's many international communities.

Bill White, Mayor

## Message from the Director

Each month, we receive numerous messages of encouragement and support from the community:

*"It was so nice to meet Mayor White and you. We are delighted to have formed this relationship [between Calgary and Houston]! Looking forward to working with you in the future."*



Helen T. Chang

Marina S. Mason  
Office of the Mayor, the City of Calgary

We will continue to serve the community with great pride.  
Thank you.

Helen T. Chang, Director

## June 2006 Highlights

### The Republic of Italy Celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> Year

Drawing more than 400 attendees, the *Italian National Day* celebration held at the Glassell School of Art of the Museum of Fine Arts on June 1 was a success. The celebration was hosted by the Consulate General of Italy and broadly supported by Italian companies operating in Houston and throughout Texas.

#### Did You Know?

In 1870, only 186 Italians were listed on Texas' census records. By 1920, that number had burgeoned to over 2000. By 1990, Texans of Italian heritage were the state's sixth largest ethnic group.

Source: <http://www.texasalmanac.com>

The *Italian National Day* is the anniversary of the beginning of the Italian Republic in

1946, commemorating the establishment of Italy's current government system. The event was attended by over 100 Italian physicians currently working at the Texas Medical Center, demonstrating the high level of connectedness Italian expatriates have within Houston.



(from left to right) Mr. Ven Lessig, Miss Niky Lessig, Consul General Cristiano Maggipinto and Miss Federica Graziola

– By Matthew Shailer

### World Trade Gala Recognizes International Leaders

On June 3, the Greater Houston Partnership held its annual *World Trade Gala* at the InterContinental Hotel. An auspicious occasion for Houston's biggest movers and shakers in the field of international commerce, the *World Trade Gala* celebrated both the individual and collaborative aspects to conducting trade in Houston, the results of which make Houston a global hub for commerce and growth.

#### Did You Know?

More than 3,300 Houston firms and organizations trading more than 259 types of products and services reported international business activities in more than 17 regions.

Source: <http://houston.bizjournals.com>

The event hosted Houston's inimitable

consular corps, a regional congressional delegation and Houston area companies for a night of recognition. Bestowed upon local international businesses are three awards: the Jesse H. Jones Award for Export Excellence, the Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr., Award for Export Excellence and the International Excellence Award. This year the award recipients are American Block Company Inc., Enduro Systems, Inc., and CB&I respectively.



A night of recognition and pleasant diversion

– By Matthew Shailer

## Houston Launches Strong Partnership with Northern Neighbor

Mayor Bill White made the first international trip when he traveled to Calgary for the Global Petroleum Show (GPS) on June 13 and met with Calgary City officials including Mayor Dave Bronconnier. Drawing more than 200 prominent businessmen from the Calgary area, the GPS featured Mayor White and Mayor Bronconnier where they signed the *Bilateral Partnership for Business and Cultural Growth and Cooperation*. The agreement will link the two cities more closely in the future in the areas of engineering, aerospace, life sciences, culture and arts. Representing Calgary at the luncheon in addition to Mayor Bronconnier were Bruce Graham, president and CEO of the Calgary Economic Development, Daryl Fridhandler, chairman of the board of the Calgary Economic Development, C. Perry Spitznagel, senior partner of Bennet Jones and Tim Bancroft, vice president of Shell Canada's Sustainable Development, Technology and Public Affairs. During the visit, Mayor White also met with the newly appointed Canadian Consul to Houston, David McGregor, who will be arriving in September this year.



*Mayor White and Mayor Bronconnier pledge cooperation across economic and cultural spectrums*



*Mayor White offers his vision of Houston-Calgary ties.*

At the GPS, Mayor White discussed how the hydrocarbon sector must more effectively communicate its contribution to an improved standard of living for people around the world. He underlined that the future of the hydrocarbon industry lies with stable countries such as the U.S. and Canada where the assumptions about commercial exchange are routine and predictable. Stressing that the next 20 years of exploration and development will be different from the last 20 years because of current environmental sensitivity, Mayor White noted that products in this sector could become scarcer and more costly in the coming decades. All attendees at the GPS were encouraged to consider opportunities available for companies in both Calgary and Houston to establish offices in the other partner city and prices were quoted for office space and housing in Houston.

Like Houston, Calgary is a confident cowboy town that grew wealthy on the petrochemical industry, incorporating the success of oil production with that of the diversity of its city. Country western music and trips to the rodeo express the vibrance of this Canadian city, while visitors flock to take in the city's burgeoning cowboy culture. Along with the culture of its citizens and historical undertones, Calgary remains an exemplary 21st century city with trade and development opportunities. Attractions, popularity, and variety display the similarities that capture the achievements of these two cities, historical cowboy boomtowns in the midst of a changing international economy.

### Did You Know?

A handshake is still considered to be a legally binding contract when doing business in Calgary.

Mayor White was accompanied on this trip by Helen T. Chang, director of the Mayor's Office of International Affairs and Development, Jeff Moseley, president and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, and Pauline Vaillancourt Rosenau, chair of the MIADC/ Canada and vice-chair of the MIADC Executive Board.

– By Pauline Vaillancourt Rosenau



## PetroVietnam Offers Investment and Trade for Houston Firms

Vietnam is one of the most dynamic markets in the world. Consistently strong economic growth combined with a more open, market-oriented trade policy is fueling major trade and investment opportunities for foreign companies. Among the leaders in international commitment is the United States Trade and Development Agency that hosted the PetroVietnam (PVN) international business briefing on June 21.

PVN is a unique company covering all petroleum operations from upstream to downstream including oil & gas exploration and production, storage, processing, transportation, distribution, power generation and services. Aside from many completed projects,



*PVN Vice President Nguyen Dang Lieu*

### Did You Know?

The Vietnamese economy is currently growing at 7%-8% a year and industrial production is expanding at twice that rate, leading Vietnam on the path to doubling in size over the next decade.

*Source: [www.buyusa.gov/vietnam](http://www.buyusa.gov/vietnam)*

PVN is expanding its activities twofold, including key projects that assist in satisfying the rapidly growing demand in Vietnam, including the *Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Project*. The PVN briefing provided an occasion for investment opportunities that would help meet important overseas development objectives and represent significant investment and export potential for U.S. firms. Nguyen Dang Lieu, vice president and head of the Vietnamese delegation for PVN, said “I hope this is another outlet for greater relations between our two countries through valuable investment that shows our country’s true potential in the international market.”

– By Angeline Vuong

## Targeting the Development of Global Leaders

In an event hosted by WorldCity, a panel of experts in global businesses enlightened guests on global trade and its impact. Dr. Angel Cabrera, president of Thunderbird, the Garvin School of International Management, was the keynote speaker providing his knowledge on the promotion of free trade in global businesses and economies.



*Dr. Angel Cabrera*

### Did You Know?

Thunderbird, the Garvin School of International Management, has operations in the U.S., Switzerland, Czech Republic, Russia, Mexico, Central and South America, and China. The 60-year-old school is considered the world’s leading institution in the education of global managers.

*Source: [www.thunderbird.edu](http://www.thunderbird.edu)*

“Global business and economy

should be based on freedom—the freedom to invest one’s savings, the freedom to sell and buy from whomever one chooses—because the opposite of engaging in global business is the loss of freedom.” Dr. Cabrera raised an international debate about the social responsibility of business schools and business institutions.

– By Tiffany Ching

## US-Arab Economic Forum

Cancelled last year because of Hurricane Katrina, the *U.S.-Arab Economic Forum* was held on June 26-30 at the Hilton Americas Hotel and featured 800 global attendees who heard speeches by leaders of Arab nations and *Fortune 500* companies. The American Arab Chamber of Commerce was one of the sponsors of this event which drew dignitaries from across the globe and whose stated purpose was to “build bridges between the U.S. and the Arab world.”

### Did You Know?

Houston has strong ties to the Middle East, with about \$8.5 billion in goods traded between the Bayou City and the Arab world in 2004.

Nijad Fares stated, “Houston was chosen as the site of this major forum partially because it is the capital of the energy industry in the world. However, Houston was also chosen because of its large, influential and highly educated Arab-American community.”

– By MaryJane Wakefield



*Nijad Fares, director of the Wedge Group, is one of the hosts of the Forum.*

## North American Bengali Conference

The North American Bengali Conference (NABC) was held at the George R. Brown Convention Center from June 29-July 2. Hosted by the Tagore Society of Houston, a cultural organization founded in 1971 by Indo-Americans from Bengal to promote the Bengali heritage, the Conference had hundreds of attendees who participated in a variety of forums.

### Did You Know?

At the conference, Bengali director Anjan Dutt will premiere his third movie which was largely shot on location in Houston and features members of Houston's thriving Bengali population.

A business forum focused on entrepreneurship and economic development was hosted to help encourage Bengali businessmen and businesswomen residing in the U.S. to participate in these arenas. Other facets of the Conference included a one-day energy seminar, Microsoft recruitment booths, film festival, entertainment venues and arts sessions.

– By MaryJane Wakefield



*Arts, culture and business interests center stage of NABC*

## Upcoming Major Event Spotlights

### Japan Delegation of Naval Ships to Visit Houston

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Training Squads will be visiting Texas from July 10-13, their first visit in almost 30 years. Three training squadrons and 800 crew members will dock in Galveston as part of a North American tour to promote goodwill between Japan and other countries and to broaden their own understanding of the world. The reception on board on July 10 will honor Force Admiral

Takanobu Sasaki and his visiting fleet. For more information, contact 713-623-6069.

Nanjing's petrochemical industry has been undergoing great changes, and it has presented an unprecedented opportunity for U.S. petrochemical companies to take part and invest in the Nanjing industry base. The *Nanjing-Houston Petrochemical Forum* will provide a unique opportunity to bring leaders of both cities, in government and in industry, to discuss business development topics of mutual interest face to face. The Deputy Mayor of Nanjing will be leading a strong petrochemical business delegation to Houston. This special event will be held at the J.W. Marriott on July 12. For more information, contact 713-247-3595.

### Nanjing-Houston Petrochemical Forum

### Military Child Education Coalition: Eighth Annual Military Child Education Coalition's Conference 2006

"Reaching New Heights for Children" is the theme for this year's *Eighth Annual Military Child Education Coalition Conference*. The event will provide professional development training for 500 educators, parents, students and military/civilian personnel from around the world. The Military Child

Education Coalition is a non-profit world-wide organization that identifies the challenges that face highly mobile military children, and increase awareness of these challenges in military and educational communities. This forthcoming event on July 12 will offer an opportunity to implement programs to meet those challenges that face military children. For more information, contact 713-623-6069.

Vive la France! A night of dancing and festivities occur on this French national holiday to commemorate the storming of Bastille in 1789. The French-American Chamber of Commerce will hold a *Bastille Day Celebration* at the Sofitel Hotel on July 14. Join the Celebration that will bring French culture, fervor, and entertainment in one grand night. For more information, contact 713-960-0575.

### Bastille Day Celebration

### Scholarship Networking Luncheon for Minority Business Entrepreneurs

Education is a key component to minority business enterprise growth in an ever-changing, competitive environment. The Houston Minority Business Council will sponsor a seminar designed for minority business owners and corporations through an effort to recognize weaknesses, challenges and need to achieve real impact to explore the most prevalent shortcomings of minority businesses. Factors affecting minority entrepreneurial success in the U.S. economy will be discussed during the *Scholarship Networking Luncheon*, which will be held at the J.W. Marriott on July 19. For more information, contact 713-271-7805.

The Greater Houston Partnership (GHP) will hold a *Flex Time Workshop* for companies interested in participating in the Mayor's flexible workplace initiative. Companies will have the opportunity to hear from employers who have implemented successful flexible work programs. Participants will learn tips and tools that will help them design a program that makes good business sense. Join this public policy event that will take place on July 27 the GHP Board Room. For more information, contact 713-844-3658.

### Flex Time Workshop for Successful Companies

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## International Houston: Opportunities and Resources

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*This issue, "International Houston: Opportunities and Resources" will continue to provide information on a wide variety of global opportunities as well as international community resources.*

### International Trade

Deadline: N.A.

China National Ocean Oil Corporation and PetroChina are interested in purchasing used offshore drilling rigs and barges. Crude and distilled oil products are also needed, and prices and stable sources are primary concerns. For more information, contact Peter Peishan Huang at 832-788-8684.

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### Monbukagakusho Scholarships

Deadline: June 26 and August 1, 2006

The Consulate General of Japan is now accepting applications for three Monbukagakusho Scholarships to study in Japan. Each scholarship includes round-trip airfare, a monthly stipend, student housing, and exemption of school fees. For more information, visit [www.cgjhouston.org](http://www.cgjhouston.org).

## Mayor's International Affairs & Development Council (MIADC)

### MIADC – Asia/ Australia

The 36 members of the Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council Asia/Australia region represent the immensely diverse and steadily growing Asian and Australian populations in Houston. To maximize its effectiveness, MIADC Asia/ Australia is seeking to identify and potentially link existing infrastructures in Asia and Australia that could benefit from partnership with Houston and vice versa. Alexander C. Chae, chair of the MIADC Asia/ Australia, is optimistic about Houston's substantial partnerships with the region and believes that Houston has even more to offer for mutual gain. As he says, "We believe that Houston is a city that has a lot of opportunity to strengthen relations with the Asian and Australian regions. Our goal is to bring about synergies between existing infrastructures and partnerships for our city to enhance its exposure on an international level."



Alexander  
C. Chae

Alexander C. Chae, partner at Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP, is elected chair of MIADC Asia/ Australia. Chae focuses on commercial and complex litigation and has functioned within the international community for several years. A previous president of the Asian American Bar Association of Houston, Texas, Chae continues to strengthen commercial and cultural ties through his involvement in the Houston Bar Association, National Asian Pacific Bar Association and the State Bar of Texas.



Glen Y.  
Gondo

Glen Y. Gondo, president and owner of Gondo Company, Inc. and Gondo Consulting, is elected chair-elect for the MIADC Asia/ Australia. An established businessman, Gondo has long been a principal proponent of international cultural and economic expansion. He reinforces global relations through his commitment to various organizations such as the Japan America Society, which he serves as president, the World Trade Organization, Greater Houston Partnership and Asian Chamber of Commerce.



Linda  
Toyota

Linda Toyota, development officer of the Holocaust Museum Houston, is elected secretary of MIADC Asia/ Australia. Toyota connects people, ideas and organizations, fostering the environment of intellectual openness and mutual understanding in which international trade thrives. Serving on the boards of organizations running the gamut from the PTA program at Bob Lanier Middle School to Leadership Houston, Toyota was one of the 12-members Japanese American Leadership Delegation selected from across America to participate in a ten-day trip across Japan in 2004, representing Houston and its international communities on a global stage.

#### MIADC – Asia / Australia Other Council Members

Ms. Pat Charnveja	Mr. Hitoshi Hasegawa	Mr. Max Lee	Mr. Joe Ting
Mr. Jan-ma Chen	Mr. Michael Ho	Mr. Wea Lee	Dr. Adams Tran
Mr. Leon Chen	Ms. Elsie Huang	Mr. Kenneth Li	Mr. Andrew Tran
Mr. Terry Cheng	Mr. Andy Hai Huynh	Dr. Shen-Ping Liang	Ms. Tammy Tran
Mr. Tim Davison	Mr. Michael Koo	Mr. Gerry Mantaring	Mr. Hoang Quan Vu
Mr. Greg Foley	Mr. Mike Kwan	Ms. Ahnlan Nguyen	Mr. Don Wang
Mr. Charles Foster	Mr. Cheol Kwon	Dr. Joseph Nguyen	Mr. Jun Yang
Mr. Harry Gee, Jr.	Ms. Gigi Lee	Mr. Hideaki Ninomiya	Mr. Jason Yoo
			Dr. Casey Youn



## Sister City Spotlight – Shenzhen

# 深圳

*This month the International Newsletter will continue to showcase each one of Houston's 16 sister cities around the globe with a closer look at each distinctive locale. This month we feature Shenzhen, the first Special Economic Zone in China.*

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Houston's sister city relationship with Shenzhen, People's Republic of China. Shenzhen is a rapidly growing city located in the River Peal Delta of Guangdong Province near Hong Kong. The one-time fishing village of Shenzhen is the first of the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) of China. The village's population exploded from 20,000 in the 1970's to 12 million today in the Greater Shenzhen area.

Shenzhen is a home to many high-tech industries and factories that produce electronics, light industrial products, textiles, garments, construction materials, machinery and chemicals. It is a major export production base for China, with over half of its products being produced for export. Additionally, one of China's two stock exchanges is located in Shenzhen.

In 2004, China ranked as the Port of Houston's ninth largest seaborne trade partner and as the top trade partner from East Asia. Seaborne trade between Houston and China that year was valued at more than \$2 billion, an 88% increase from 2003. China was also Houston's second-largest air cargo trade partner in East Asia, valued at more than \$205 million.



*Houston Garden of Spheres in Shenzhen*



*Shen-blue, a gift to Shenzhen from the people of Houston*

Houston has the 10th largest Asian population and is home to one of the largest and fastest-growing Chinese- and Asian-American communities in the U.S. In addition to these communities, the Houston-Shenzhen Sister City Association strengthens the strong economic and cultural ties between Houston and China.

The Association fundraised over \$300,000 to donate the Shen-blue statue to the City of Shenzhen. They also collaborated with the City of Shenzhen to develop a *Houston Garden of Spheres* in Shenzhen. The garden represents Houston's association with space exploration. The local Association is currently planning to build a garden representative of Shenzhen in Houston. For more information on the Association and their activities, contact the Houston International Protocol Alliance at 713-227-3395.

– **By Millie Canter and Alma Maldonado**

### Special Thanks

*Article submitted by Millie Canter and Alma Maldonado, Houston International Protocol Alliance.*

## Meet the Consular Corps in Houston

# Israel מדינת ישראל

*This month we go to the southeastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea to speak with the Honorable Asher Yarden, Israeli Consul General in Houston, to discuss everything from education to future trade missions.*



Consul General  
Asher Yarden

Israel is a land strongly imbued with historical, religious and natural character. Though small in area, the sweep of geography from the Negev to Haifa has become a spiritual home for over three billion of the world's population. At once a land of antiquity and striking modernity, Israel is reaching out to Houston for lasting future partnerships.

"We want Israel to be seen as a land of opportunity and a natural ally for strategic exchanges," affirmed Consul General Asher Yarden. And it is with this exchange policy in mind that the Consul General goes about cultivating the strong relationship that exists between Houston and Israel, a partnership that stretches back to the Consulate's founding in the 1970's and continues today along lines of commerce, community outreach and activism, educational and technological exchanges. Consul General Yarden's attachment to Houston has become an affair of the heart, and despite his short time posted in Houston, he says that Houston "has managed to exceed my already high expectations!" His warm sentiments are reflected in the abundance of connections – interpersonal and professional – that exists between Israel and Houston.

The Consulate General of Israel to the Southwest, which serves the areas of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, will be the featured country at the Consular Ball this summer, the second time in the history of this event. As proud as the Consul General is to represent Israel to Houston, he is especially pleased with the chance to introduce

Houston to Israel. This summer the Consul General will invite to his home the Houston-area *Mickey Leland Kibbutzim Internship* participants, 10 high school students who will receive a fully sponsored trip to Israel. The Consul General points to a number of notable Israel-Houston cross cultural partnerships which led in one case to an Israeli-born artist being featured in the *Bayou City Arts Festival* this year, and in another, Houston Comets player Dominique Canty twice playing for Israeli teams during off season stretches. Houston is Israel's partner in sea trade with a direct shipping line open between the Port of Houston and ports in Israel, which helps to transport the \$1

billion in annual manufacturing trade that flows between Israel and Texas. Premiere academic institutions such as Baylor University, Rice University and the University of Houston receive millions of dollars in grants from bi-national research foundations to take part in research with Israeli institutions. Add



Map of Israel

to this list of substantial partnerships the Consul General's hope to establish a direct flight between Houston and Israel and the possible future trade missions the Consulate is developing, and there is much reason to be excited.

– By Matthew Shailer

## International Hub: Johnson Space Center

*“From the time of our births, humans have felt a primordial urge to explore—to blaze new trails, map new lands and answer profound questions about ourselves and our universe.” NASA’s Mission Statement on “Why We Explore.”*

Johnson Space Center (JSC), located 50 minutes from Houston, is the leader for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA) efforts in human space exploration. NASA’s current missions include the space shuttle, international space station and the vision for space exploration, including a trip to the Moon, then to Mars and beyond.

The home base for the men and women of NASA’s professional astronaut corps, JSC is a critical training school. All space explorers from the United States and our space station partner nations are taught at JSC.

Additionally, JSC has been the home of NASA’s space shuttle program for more than 20 years, conducting the longest space flight endeavor in history. JSC is the lead center in the design and implementation of the International Space Station, coordinating the efforts of 16 spacefaring nations. The station is a microgravity research platform where astronauts and cosmonauts live and work for months at a time.

Another key element of JSC is the Mission Control Center(MCC) which directs all space shuttle missions, including International Space Station assembly flights. MCC also manages all activity on board the international space shuttle.

The current director of JSSC is Michael L. Coats, a veteran of three space shuttle flights, and a



Michael L. Coats

distinguished Navy aviator before joining NASA in 1978. He piloted his first shuttle mission in 1984, then commanded two more before retiring from NASA and the Navy in 1991. Coats last served as vice president of Lockheed Martin Astronautics in Denver.

Since 1961, more than 400 individuals have ventured into space, and the international cooperation has become more and more evident. Now aboard the International Space Station, astronauts are working to improve life on Earth and extend life beyond our home planet.

– By MaryJane Wakefield

### Did You Know?

**MOON**—By going to the moon for extended periods of time, astronauts will search for resources and learn how to work safely in a harsh environment—stepping stones to future exploration. The moon also offers many clues about the time when the planets were formed.

**MARS**—Robotic missions have found evidence of a watery past, suggesting that simple life forms may have developed long ago and may persist beneath the surface today. Human exploration could provide answers to some profound questions.

## The Global Bridge: French-American Chamber of Commerce

*Each month the International Newsletter will feature a section “the Global Bridge” introducing the chambers of commerce in Houston dedicated to promoting Houston’s international image.*

The French-American Chamber of Commerce, Houston (FACC) was founded in 1977 as an independent non-profit corporation with a mission to promote economic, commercial and financial relations between France and Houston. A member-driven organization, the Chamber is managed by an executive director and a board of 20 directors.

The membership has grown to about 150 companies and individual representatives of various sectors of industry and business: banking and finance, oil and gas, manufacturing, luxury retail, transportation, law firms, etc.

Through its monthly business and networking events, the FACC provides members at all levels with many opportunities to network and improve business and social links between the U.S. and France. The Chamber also encourages members to participate in forums for trade and investment issues and leverages strong links with other French or European organizations for the benefit of the membership. For example, on October 4, 2006, the FACC will host a half-day seminar in Austin about investment opportunities in France, in association with the French Consulate, Invest in France Agency and Ouest Atlantique Agency.

The FACC also hosts a number of social events throughout the year to celebrate France’s cultural heritage and traditions, with annual milestone events such as *Bastille Day* on July 14 and the *Beaujolais Wine and Food Festival* on the third Thursday of November, a celebration of Beaujolais wines and gastronomy with more than 1,000 people in attendance.

The Chamber is part of a growing network of French-American Chambers of Commerce in the United

States under the umbrella of FACC National and enjoys the benefits of that association, among which is the capacity to sponsor J-1 visas for students and young professionals through the New York chapter. The FACC network currently has chapters in 19 U.S. cities, representing more than 4,000 companies and individuals nationwide.



*Jean-François Bonneté*

Jean-François Bonneté was recently elected president of the Chamber to replace Dennis E. Petito who has been elected chairman of the Board, after having been president for more than four years.

The establishment of the French-American Scholarship Fund, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, has been a great milestone for the Chamber. The Chamber had been granting scholarships since 1996 thanks to the proceeds of its annual *Beaujolais Festival*. By incorporating a charitable fund, the Chamber’s ambition is to raise more funds in order to help more deserving students each year. For more information, visit <http://www.facchouston.com>. – **By the French-American Chamber of Commerce.**

### Special Thanks

*Article submitted by the French-American Chamber of Commerce.*



## International Frontier – George DeMontrond III

*Every month we focus on a Houstonian who has made an indelible mark on our city through outstanding contributions and services to the growth of Houston as an international city.*



*George  
DeMontrond III*

Native Houstonian George DeMontrond III has seen Houston evolve in his lifetime from a sleepy provincial town to a major global metropolis. “Houston is now so different from when I was a child. One only has to look to the Gulfton area for the rich ethnic diversity which is so great. For example, at Lee High School there are now approximately 50 dialects of first languages spoken. Houston’s population diversity is about 20 years ahead of its time in relation to other large U.S. cities.”

A graduate of Princeton University with degrees in basic engineering and economics, DeMontrond also obtained his doctor of jurisprudence degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Upon graduation, he joined his family’s company, DeMontrond Automotive Group, Inc., and he currently serves as its President and CEO. Spanning over three generations, the family business dates back to the early 1900’s with a Houston debut in 1953 when George DeMontrond, Jr., George’s father, opened DeMontrond Buick. The death of George DeMontrond, Jr., saw the torch pass to his sons, George DeMontrond, III, and Lea DeMontrond. Their dealership has grown into a retailer with sales in excess of \$275,000,000, employing 400 in four Houston area locations. DeMontrond is also very active in civic and philanthropic endeavors. He is

currently chairing Houston’s efforts to bid for the 2016 Olympic Games and notes that only four other U.S. cities—Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Chicago—are in the bidding. Says DeMontrond, “One of the greatest challenges has been to inform people throughout the country about Houston’s international influence. Our Texas Medical Center is the largest in the world and welcomes heads of state often. The airport system here is so renown that its employees offer consultations to other global airports. Additionally, by March of every year, our Port will have conducted business with every country in the world.” An avid Olympics fan, DeMontrond has been following the games for quite some time. He attended the 1984 games in Los Angeles, the 2000 games in Sydney and the 2004 games in Athens. “Another big plus for Houston’s bid is our light rail line which will tie all the sports venues together,” comments DeMontrond.

DeMontrond serves on the boards of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, Greater Houston Partnership, Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Houston Grand Opera, World Affairs Council and others. Married to the former Marilyn Gracey for 29 years and the father of two children, DeMontrond is indeed a busy man who is optimistic about Houston’s future! – **By MaryJane Wakefield**

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★★★★★  
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Fax: (713) 247-2100**

**Next Submission  
Deadline:  
July 20, 2006**

## July – 2006 Event Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Venue/Contact	
July 1	7:30pm	Houston Symphony: Houston Chronicle Dollar Concert	Venue:	Jones Hall Contact: 713-238-1475
July 6	11:30am-1:30pm	Greater Houston Partnership: Luncheon featuring U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel	Venue:	Hyatt Regency Houston Contact: 713-844-3657
July 6	7:30am	Houston Networking News: Exchange Breakfast	Venue:	Amazon Grill Contact: 281-778-6661
July 10-12	6:30pm	City of Houston: Reception for Japan Delegation aboard Japanese Vessel Kashima	Venue:	Galveston Harbor, Pier 29 Contact: 713-652-2977
July 12	9:30am-11:30am	City of Houston Mayor's Office: Nanjing-Houston Petrochemical Forum	Venue:	JW Marriott Hotel Contact: MOIAD
July 12	Noon	The Military Child Education Coalition: 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Military Child Education Coalition's Conference 2006	Venue:	Hyatt Regency Hotel Contact: 713-623-6069
July 12	Noon-1:15pm	Asian Chamber of Commerce: Luncheon featuring Keynote speaker Daniel A. Krohn	Venue:	Westin Galleria Hotel Contact: 713-782-7222
July 12	6:00pm	Asia Society – Texas: Contemporary Salon, Tam Van Tran, Psychonaut	Venue:	Blaffer Gallery Contact: 713-439-0051
July 14	7:00pm	French-American Chamber of Commerce: Bastille Day Celebration	Venue:	Sofitel Hotel Contact: 713-960-0575
July 14	6:30pm	The Czech Center: "Cooking with the Klimas" book signing with Marcella Klima	Venue:	Prague Hall Contact: 713-528-2060
July 15	10:00am-5:00pm	The Czech Center: Brides Against Breast Cancer Charity event	Venue:	Prague Hall Contact: 713-528-2060
July 18	6:30pm	Asia Society Texas: Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, the Last song of Dusk	Venue:	River Oaks Compass Bank Contact: 713-439-0265
July 19	9:30am-4:00pm	Houston Minority Business Council: Scholarship Networking Luncheon	Venue:	J.W. Marriott Hotel Contact: 713-271-7805
July 25	8:00am-10:00am	Texas Department of Transportation: Business Opportunity Procurement Forum	Venue:	HCC Contact: 512-486-5513
July 26	4:00pm-5:00pm	Houston Technology Center: Orientation	Venue:	Houston Technology Center Contact: 713- 658-1750

*We have one simple goal: to promote Houston as a renowned international city.*

The contents are intended for general information purposes only.

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